



# The Anxiety Caused by Social Media on Teenage Girls

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**Abstract.** This article aims to give you an idea of how pathological anxiety associated with excessive social media exposure can affect girls' mental health. In this process, people are also exploring their own hearts through this event, so as to find their true selves. This study will use face-to-face surveys to gather real information.

**Keywords:** SocialMedia, Anxiety, Appearance, Teenage girls.

## 1 Introduction

As time goes by, our standard of living is gradually improving compared with the past. Technology is advancing, technology is constantly seeking perfection and convenience. It's not just technology. People are demanding more of themselves. We care about our appearance, we care about our body, and we wish we could be more perfect. Technological advances have given us more opportunities to live online. For example, we can check information on the Internet, publish our own life, enjoy the beautiful scenery that we can't go to see the elegant demeanor of different places. Because of inventions like this,

Social media is a big part of many people's lives, especially young people. We often read other people's posts on the Internet, or post things ourselves. Most people use social media to create their ideal look. It's like we take a hundred selfies and only choose the best one or two to post online. Sometimes we get to know ourselves through feedback, or at least most of us do. We also see ourselves through the eyes of others.

It's interesting that when we learn about other people's lives, we can't help but compare ourselves to them. We feel inferior to superior people and superior to those who are not as good as we are. Either of these feelings can paralyze us, causing us to lose our true selves and fall into the misery of ego comparison.

It has to do with what we were taught as children. Take me for example. I'm in China. Chinese education teaches children to be humble and low-key. Sometimes, old-fashioned parents can create a stressful environment for children. The home environment is an important part of who we are. It's not just about whether your family is rich or poor, it's about your family's education. Another example: Chinese children are affected by punishment and reward education in all aspects. If you do well, you

will receive a better attitude, more love, and more rewards. On the contrary, if you behave badly, you will be said, you will be punished, and you will get less love from the teacher. It's ingrained in our brains because we think that by being better, maybe we'll be treated better, maybe we'll be recognized by others! But I want to say that wanting to be better is both good and bad. Because in social media, it can go off track. In today's society, we have a social consensus that exposing too many perfect faces can affect our standards of beauty. Most people go online using similar software. So basically, friends in a circle can find similar topics. When we talk to our friends about food, fitness, entertainment and, of course, other people on social media, we unconsciously reveal our preferences. As we read more social media posts, our aesthetic will follow. That's why there's so much like it on social media now. I call it assimilation. If one person posts something that goes viral, many similar videos will follow. Because that's heat. That's what makes them hot. Some people see this heat as their value, some as their profit, and so on.

Being addicted to the Internet sometimes makes us lose ourselves. It blurs our sense of who we are. Let us be changed by the current social environment. Let's continue to assimilate, to be what everyone says, to be what everyone agrees to be. When we don't live up to our ideals of beauty, we feel a little disappointed in ourselves. We get anxious. Especially young girls, more and more young girls are pursuing a thin figure. It also has to do with vanity in our human nature. There are some people in this society whose extreme thoughts make them bitter when they start to compare themselves to others. The problem is getting worse and worse, and they can't get rid of it, even if they understand why. But being in the shadows for a long time can make them too concerned about what others think of them, which can make them anxious and fall into a deeper cycle.

## 2 Literature review

In 2011 Koskina define appearance anxiety as “Social appearance anxiety is an unexplored concept in eating disorders (ED).” [1] However, this is not very complete. Furthermore, Tanya Hawes defines “Social media (SM) can create a climate of social comparison and preoccupation with appearance, which can pose risks of emotional problems, such as depression and social anxiety” [2]

With the development of social media anxiety, it can be also seen as a fear that others won't approve of how they look can lead to deep anxiety and a low sense of self-worth. The extent to which we use social media has a direct impact on how we feel about our appearance and can also make us more sensitive or anxious. People with appearance anxiety often have symptoms such as social phobia and perfectionism that make them anxious and stuck in it.

Kleemans have done a similar search. She did an experiment with 144 girls that is 14-18 years old, she showed them two different selfie photos. One is original another was reshaped, and she got the result which is recent social concern about ‘manipulated photos’ is a common and reasonable thing. ‘Adolescent girls are the most socially competitive group. [3]

Another similar research is from Melanie [4], who discusses the appearance anxiety symptoms and appearance self-esteem growth trajectory, that is to say, appearance anxiety is caused by the past in childhood to a certain extent, more precocious children are more likely to worry about their appearance. a casual word of parents or a joke of good friends may be a major cause for their facial anxiety.

The influence of social media on emotional distress varies by gender, and the time spent on social media by girls has a stronger relationship between emotional distress. In addition, passive use was more strongly associated with depressive mood symptoms of girls. Future research should include risk and protective factors as mediators of different types of social media use and adolescents' emotional distress. Social media is now the main active platform for young people. We can always see all kinds of people posting about their daily life on social media platforms, including students, office workers, and middle-aged and elderly people enjoying their lives. But it is the younger group (12-23 years old) that gets the most attention. Because social media is a public and open platform, if you post something, you are exposing some of your privacy, and you're receiving good and bad feedback from others. If you are a viewer, watching other people's content all the time will affect your aesthetic perception of the long run, just like being brainwashed.

Still, an experimental study predicts that women that took and posted selfies on social media would feel more anxious, less confident, and less attractive, even if they could retouch and retouch. Further research came out and found that it was exactly as predicted. There's a strong correlation between those selfies and mood. Many studies, past and present, have documented the impact of social advertising media on us. For example, more and more people, especially women, are considering plastic surgery. Demand for cosmetic surgery has increased as a result of so-called beauty standards standardizing on social media. Thick lips or large eyes are considered a sign of beauty. Those who do not want to do plastic surgery to become better themselves, like to have a specific template after plastic surgery, just add all the beautiful parts of web celebrity to their body, regardless of whether it is suitable or not. In particular, those who follow a lot of web celebrities on social media, or who like to spend money on social media, are significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their appearance. In fact, why women feel more anxious, this is also worth exploring the question. The question led to a term called male gaze [5]. According to Sarah vanbuskirk, the male gaze describes a way of portraying and looking at women that empowers men while sexualizing and diminishing women. While biologically, from early adolescence on, we are driven to look at and evaluate each other as potential mates, the male gaze twists this natural urge, turning the women into passive items to possess and use as props.

Research questions:

RQ1: How teenage girls feel about their appearance and whether they have problems with facial anxiety?

RQ2: Do teenage girls believe that using and consuming social media has a positive, negative, or no impact on their emotional health?

RQ3: How does this relate to their own social media habits?

### 3 Methodology

Four girls from RDF International School in Shenzhen, China, were invited to complete the questionnaire. The five girls are Anita, Yoyo, Kitty, Amy and Cindy. The researchers wanted to get some basic information about them before they actually started asking them questions. 1. Their ages. The average amount of time they spend on social media each day. 3. What grade are they from? 4. Social media apps they use. 5. Do you have anxiety?

After asking the basic information, the actual questionnaire consisted of five questions. It's all around this theme. So, to make sure the results were reliable, the researchers didn't ask them these questions directly in case they answered without thinking. They were first shown a video on YouTube. It's called, "You're prettier than you think." This is a six-minute video from Dove. It's about how we see ourselves and how others perceive us. Then compare the differences between the two. It concludes that some of the flaws we perceive ourselves to be in the eyes of others may become our unique characteristics. Our researchers use this video to relax the girls so they can open up and think through their answers to later interview questions. We tend to exaggerate our shortcomings and ignore our beauty. After the girls watch the video, the researchers will begin examining these questions. However, when the researchers interviewed different people, the researchers shuffled the order of the questions.

Survey questions:

How do you feel when you watch this video, good, bad, or nothing, or do you feel something deeper?

Do you often check We chat moments or Xiao Hong Shu/Weibo/Ticktock to see what is going on?

What do you usually find interesting on social media? Food, photography, life vlog, fitness, celebrities? Please add.

After seeing so many great moments on social media, do you appreciate the lives of social media celebrities or their looks? You'd think that watching social media would help you find your purpose and get better. Or does it make you think you're too imperfect, make you think you're not as good as them, feel anxious, or feel nothing at all?

What do you want to say to all those girls out there who are anxious about their perfect lives on social media? (Their trouble: When they compare themselves to bloggers online, they feel less beautiful than others.)

### 4 Hypothesis

My Hypothesis is after my interviewees watched the video at the beginning, they will be more confident and feel more confident to talk. Dive into the questions, the researcher hypothesis that three-quarters of interviewees almost spent 3 hours a day on social media APPs and they usually find it interesting in fitness methods, beauty products introduction, makeup teaching, outfit teaching, photo skills, and so on. Almost all girls used Xiao Hong Shu and Weibo to watch Videos about beauty and

blogger pictures. In my hypothesis, THE RESEARCHER will say fifty-five percent or more girls in an international school will feel anxiety after checking social media because people around them are mature and splendid so this will cause intangible stress to make them suffer if they were not pretty, and instead of looking for their strengths, they are more likely to look for their weaknesses and focus on them. However, appearance anxiety can also exist because of born in a family lack of support, so the result is probably pretty open. Male maze also speaks to the current social situation, as insecure women are tortured by the gaze -- not in the true sense, but in the sense that they need to change, not for themselves, but for the man. Especially in China, there is a common phenomenon that women see themselves as the object of choice rather than the initiative. It has everything to do with the way we were raised. Men are told from an early age to be independent and to struggle in their careers. And no matter how many career achievements a woman has, the most concerned question is whether she has married or had children. Of course, this is the concept handed down from generation to generation, affecting our perception of their own value, but also the formation of women to their own value to depreciate. There are a number of reasons why women can develop facial anxiety. All of these reasons have to do with family education, living environment, previous experience and interpersonal relationships.

## 5 Findings

Through my interviews, the researcher found out that all the girls had feelings for this YouTube video. Anita said: 'The results in the video make me feel real because if the researcher were you, the researcher would magnify my flaws and be mean to myself all the time.' It can be seen that people have the habit of exaggerating their shortcomings. The researcher also learned from this interview that the way we see ourselves comes from the impact other people have on us. Kitty feels comfortable during she watched the video because she feels she is judged by people who think her clothes don't match and she is fat. "When those people say bad things about me, THE RESEARCHER want to ignore their faces, but the researcher can't. After watching the video, the researcher thinks the researcher need to change my mind and thoughts, maybe the researcher shouldn't be so sensitive. The two girls had the same idea. They thought it was a meaningful activity, said Amy. "It has been very successful, making girls realize how beautiful they can be and boosting their confidence." In her daily, she always like to bring other people happiness. She is very confidence and also very modest, this kind of personality helped her a lot when she faces problems like loss or failure. When Amy saw the video, she not only thought it was meaningful, but also thought that this kind of social activity should get more publicity in China. She said society also needed to pay more attention to people's mental health at a time when people were often less confident about themselves. Filming videos like this and posting them on the Internet is sure to change most people's minds. In the interview, she also mentioned to me that she likes reading books very much, especially books on philosophy and psychology. She found it helpful to learn more about herself and who

she is. And studying psychology and philosophy has become an indispensable part of her life.

Cindy agrees. After watching the video, she was even moved. Because she had been in a deep state of anxiety that she was not perfect enough, she did not become confident even when those around her praised her. But when she saw the video, she said she felt more confident in herself. The researcher thinks it should be the message of a good video, it is positive and can let people find the essence and see the truth. In this case, it also works well for people to discover their beauty. In the interview, the researcher also found that people look at different things on social media, but they all spend a lot of time there. Anita spends the least time on social media. On average, she spends just two hours a day on social media. She prefers to spend her time on her hobby of painting and publishes her works on the Internet. She was the only one of the interviewees to do so. Other girls regularly use social media to watch content they are interested in, such as travel, food, beauty, animals, movies, etc. Then comes the crucial question. The researcher asked the girls if social media had affected how they felt about their appearance. The researcher gets both negative and positive results. However, most of the girls said that sometimes they envied but would not be anxious about it. They are relatively positive. On the flip side, one of my interviewees, Cindy, said that she often suffers from low self-esteem because she has been denigrated. She hasn't been able to move on from the negative comments her ex-boyfriend made about her.

## 6 Conclusion

Whether or not a person is anxious depends largely on several reasons. Environment, family, personality. The environment and the people around you your family, your friends, your teachers, your cousins. Your boss or a stranger. Each of us lives in a world where we are both hated and loved. It's easy to understand and easy to accept. It's like the saying I'm not money. I can't make everyone love me. If you live in a positive environment, you will absorb this trait and be more positive in your own situations. Conversely, it affects us more when people around you undermine you. Many wise scholars in the past have discussed the influence of the family of origin on our lives. Our personalities are closely related to our families of origin, and our personalities are closely related to our environment. Because in ordinary people's perception, our present is determined by our past. The past made us who we are. So, people think the past is extremely important and they get stuck in it. In fact, though our connection to the environment is real. But we must know that who we are now is not who we were. Although it is difficult to change such thoughts in a fixed environment, we can change our thoughts. All these so-called labels come from the definitions we give ourselves. This is an illusion that our brains are making. This is our brain. The only thing that keeps coming up is our mind, which is the most likely thing to happen when people are unconscious. Eckhart Tolle said I wasn't part of my life. I am life, I am now. People receive a lot of personal information that does not belong to them when they are unconscious. When we do not know who we are, we will get lost and fall into

anxiety, fear and panic. Only in the present moment can one find the breakthrough, the moment to find their true inner self. The past is the present of the past, and the future is made up of the present of every moment. All we can do is be present. Who we are is a lifelong problem that requires individuals to constantly explore and deepen their self-knowledge? In this way, we can quickly return to the present and accomplish what we can do in the present even when we are unconscious. My research: The effects of social media on young girls can vary in severity. Some of the symptoms are common, and girls may only occasionally feel uncomfortable psychologically. But there is serious part, involved in all aspects of life, and then eventually erupted in because of social media events lead to abnormal psychological status, tendency to escape and delay, affect daily life completely, this kind of situation will have to be looking for professionals in time, whether psychological counseling or a doctor can. When these problems are solved, the real attraction is to discover and understand yourself. Through self-understanding, you can find your true heart and become more aware of your feelings and needs. We are divided into self and ego. The higher self is the intelligent we, and it is our present moment. It is full of peace, love, acceptance and so on. On the other hand, self-denial, jealousy, comparison, denial of reality, escape reality. It's all about our ego. Sometimes we don't know we are in our own state because it may have become the silent background music of our lives. On the contrary, if we are present, then people feel happy in that moment, people feel great. But we need to distinguish the ego gives us a moment of false happiness, cannot last too long, here we need to distinguish the difference between joy and happiness, joy is issued from the inside out, others cannot take away your joy, and happiness is temporary, is to rely on external things to get satisfaction. The higher self will consider the benefits of future life, which will make us smoother and more comfortable. But it doesn't come up very often, and we need to find it and identify it, especially to distinguish it from the ego. Find your peace. Meditation is a great option to help us find our own sense of presence and self-awareness. In my survey results, I am happy that most girls are not prone to anxiety, perhaps because the interviewees are a group of female high school students who do not have much social experience and do not pay too much attention to the operation of social media, which is correct. As far as I know, many Chinese social media experts, especially those in the makeup field, suffer from severe appearance anxiety and need medication to live a normal life. These bloggers are very anxious and conceited. They are afraid that their content will not be liked and accepted by everyone. They are afraid that without traffic they will not be able to make a living (most of them are professional and focus on personal media). So sometimes when there are no jobs or the numbers aren't good, they worry. Some bloggers may be more relaxed, but some younger bloggers are more prone to anxiety and other conditions. Therefore, my research results are relatively optimistic. But people still need to be vigilant and try to keep themselves present at all times if you choose to do so. Once you get into anxiety, it's hard to get out of it. Although anxiety can be severe or mild, once it comes, it doesn't go away easily. Everyone suffers from anxiety at some point, and in good times, it can act as a catalyst for our work, making us more motivated or eager to work with passion. If anxiety is in a less optimistic situation, then it is painful. It doesn't help us. It hurts our bodies and our minds. To solve this conun-

drum, we may need to take drugs to control our brains, or psychological counseling. Another way to deal with any situation is to constantly encourage yourself to stay positive for the long term, to get out of your head and back to reality. Emotional pain is much deeper and more lasting than physical pain [6–8].

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